

The Colne Valley Regional Park as a case study



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Managing Agent (Groundwork South) for CVRP

Why is important?

Strategic green zone 43 sq m - 10m+ people within 15km

100's of green spaces, 5 country parks, 270 km RoW

20 Nature Reserves, 13 SSSI's

>70 lakes, >200km rivers, associated wetland habitats

Key part of London's GB – first taste of countryside to west

Importance: Regional (recreation) National (wildlife)

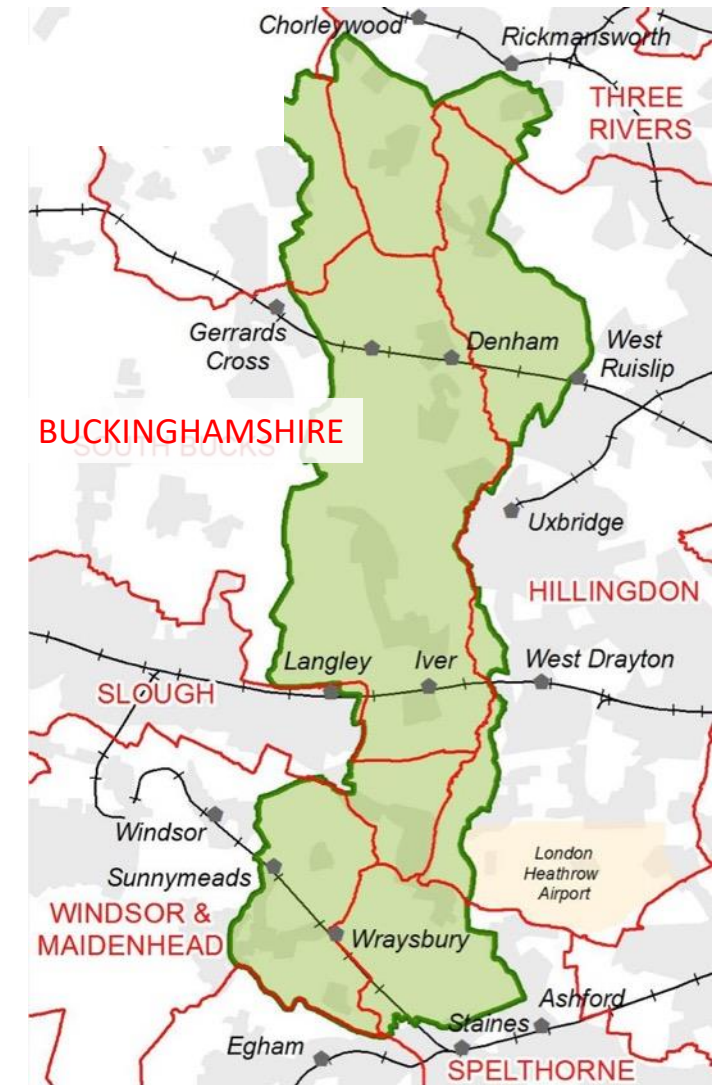
Value: Strategic - The sum of the parts

Most pressured part of the 'inner' Green Belt

Think of it as an asset – a quality of life complement to city

CVRP as a partner - charity – levers in funding

Huge potential, if strategically planned



What do we do?



Colne Valley: A Landscape on the Edge the Landscape Partnership in numbers

800 volunteers
contributing **8,000 hours**
to conserve and
improve the
Colne Valley

7 herds of conservation cattle
helping to bring nature
back to special places



Signs

42 wayfinding signs,
20 information boards, and **4 hand-carved statues** to mark the Colne Valley Trail

36 people trained to check for signs of water voles and monitor for mink

and **44km** of rivers surveyed

1 unifying vision for improving local green and blue spaces

32 organisations collaborating

100 River Rangers + 30 fully trained

5 weirs adapted to help fish and eels move freely along the rivers



Colne Valley Park covers **40 square miles**
on the edge of **5 counties**
Over **70 lakes**
200km of river and canals

1.5km of river corridor enhanced for water voles



8km of river managed sympathetically for water voles by anglers

Water saving advice in **14 different languages**

70km of river checked for damaging invasive species

44 Fishery managers trained in nature conservation



14 places improved for countryside recreation and exploration

72 training and expert sessions

4 knowledge exchanges to help local conservation groups swap great ideas

Spreading the word through:

- 2** Interpretation centres
- 4** social media platforms
- 1** website
- 20** newsletters
- 20** walk leaflets

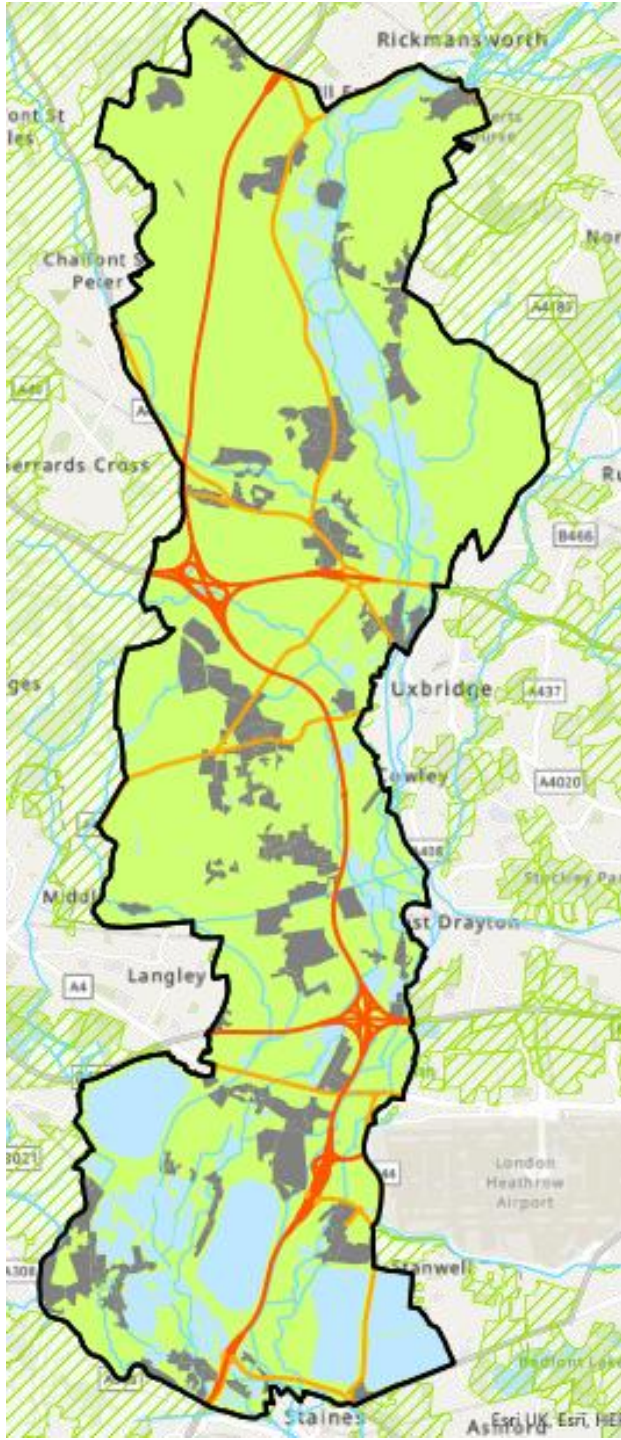
6 areas improved for habitat, not including voles and fisheries

150 events to bring people closer to nature in their area



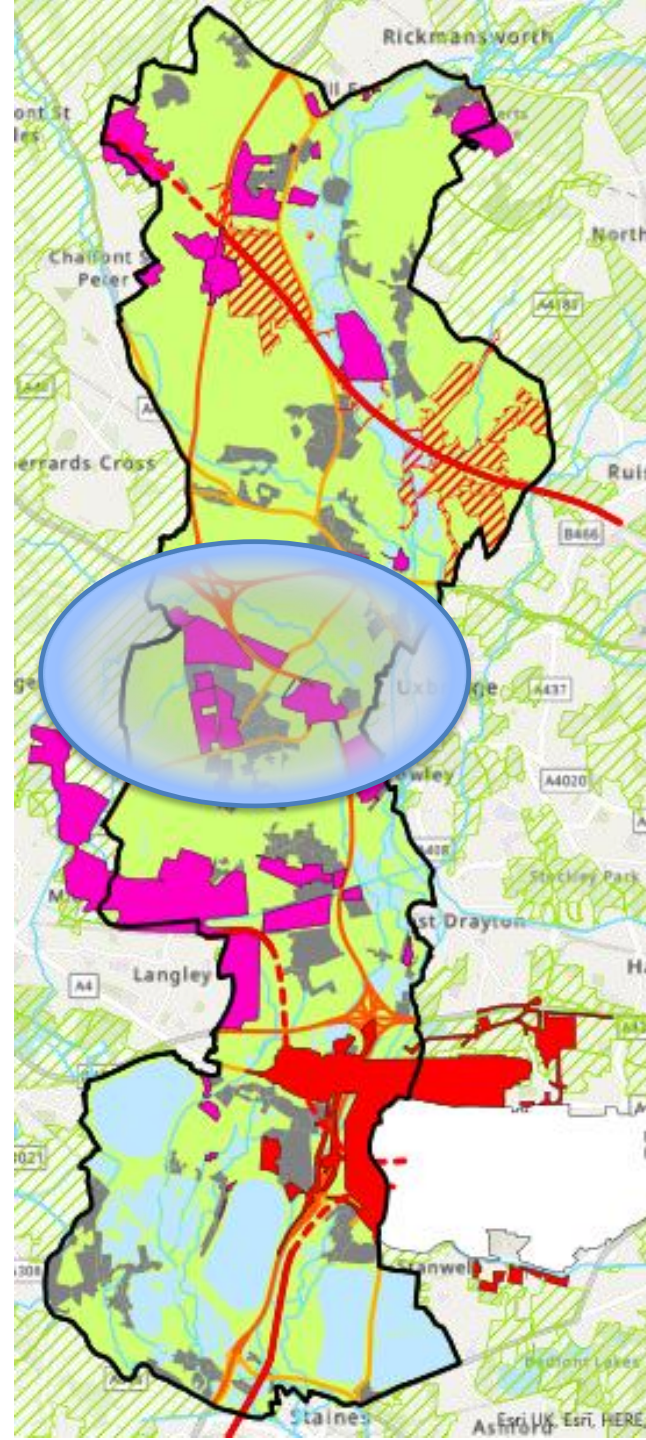
2 trainees now in employment or further study

Good work to improve the Colne Valley as a resource for people and nature



Colne Valley Regional Park

A 2018 baseline



Colne Valley Regional Park (The Future?)

Showing all infrastructure schemes

and

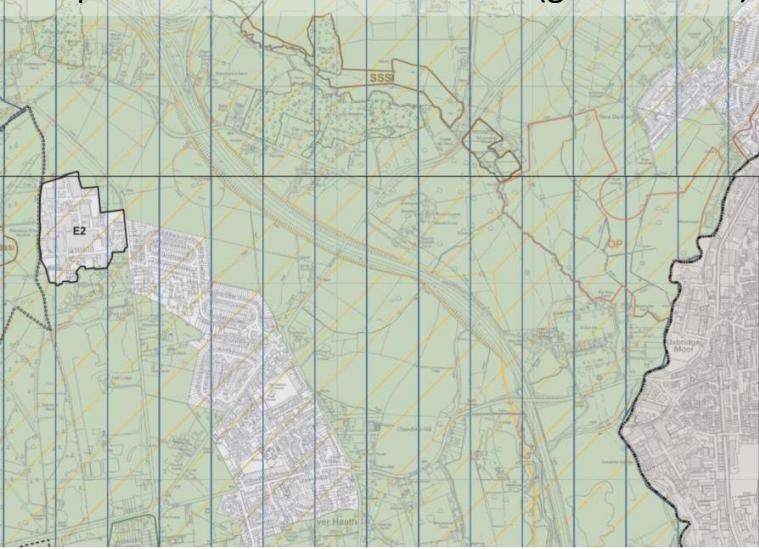
Approved development e.g. Pinewood

and

If planned proposals (from LAs and others) are followed through

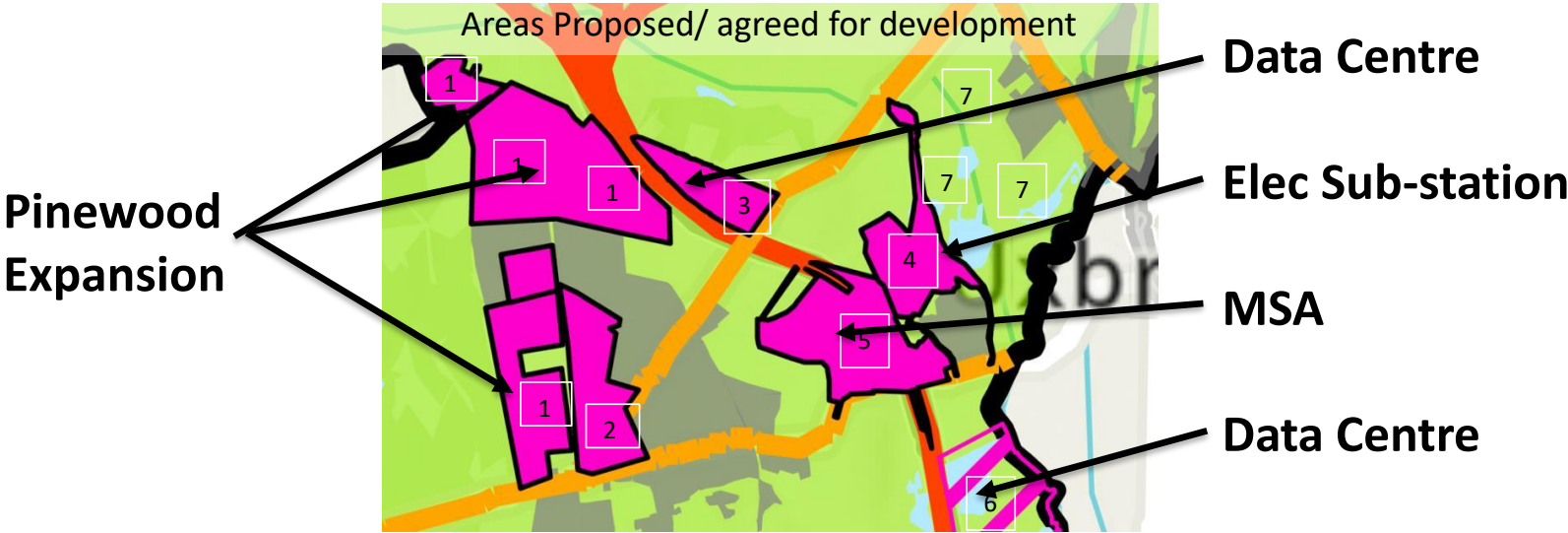
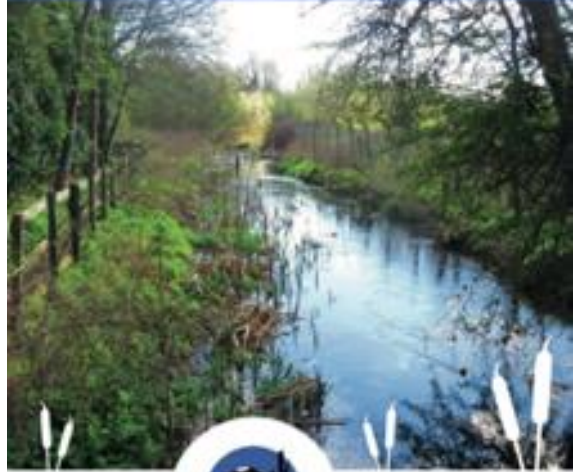
Connectivity – a strategic opportunity

Iver Heath to Uxbridge area: Adopted Green Belt
Adopted Green Belt in Local Plans (green colour)



Extract from 2019 Colne & Crane GI Strategy (non stat and cross border)

Exploring the Colne Valley from Uxbridge





Campaign:

Countryside in Crisis - a call for action

Persuade decision-makers to **act now** to safeguard the special landscape of the Colne Valley Regional Park for future generations and enable it to realise its full potential for the benefit of people and wildlife.

We are pressing for implementation of a five-point plan:

1. Influence Local Planning
2. Restore the Landscape
3. Reform National Planning
4. Establish Status
5. Protect Nature



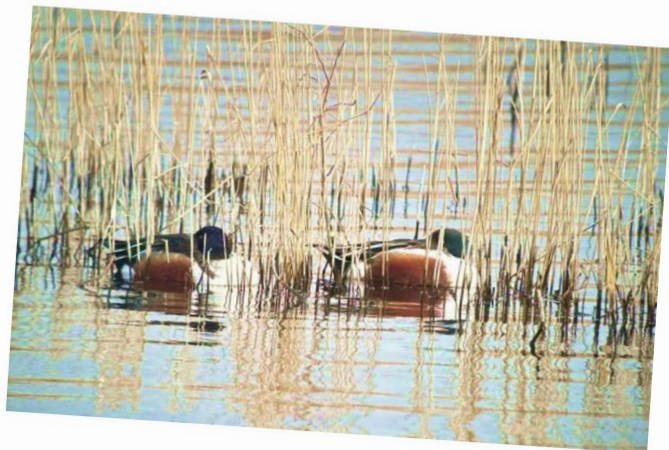
3) Reform National Planning

- Recognise the **intrinsic value of countryside** to Green Belt policy
- Ensure that if major development is to happen, it is **Plan Led**, not via Very Special Circumstances (avoiding strategic mitigation & compensatory improvements)
- Introduce **strategic planning** at a landscape-scale, beyond Local Authority boundaries and 'red lines'
- Ensure that all change leads to **better connectivity** with generous green corridors for wildlife and people



5 Protect Nature

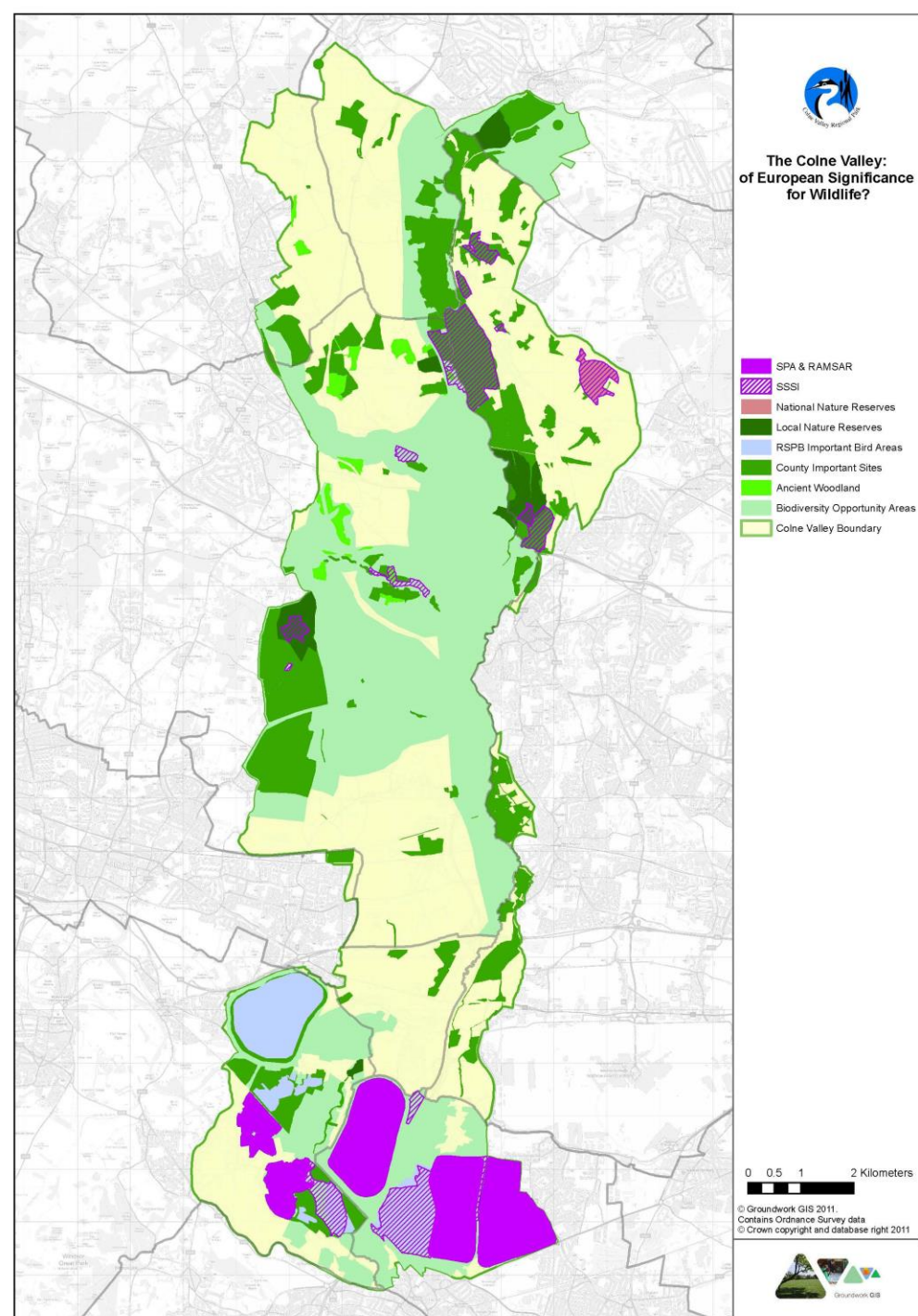
The wetland resource of the Colne Valley:
an assessment of its importance to nature conservation,
with special reference to waterbirds



Graham White
October 2023



- Evidence-led landscape-scale protection of nationally-important wetland
- Local Nature Reserves



A special place

A mosaic of farmland, woodland and water





Thank you

www.colnevalleypark.org.uk

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Join the Friends of the Colne Valley Park.